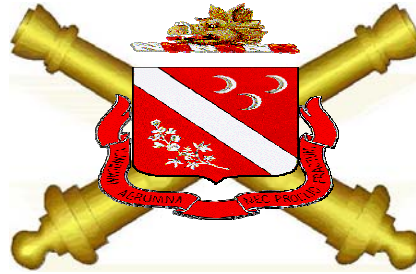


LIGHTNING**BOLT****Never Broken****LIGHTNING 6 COMMENTS...**

Team Lightning Family,

Greetings from Bayji, Iraq!! The task force departed Germany and hit the ground running in Kuwait without missing a beat. Our journey to the northern most portion of the Division's sector was professionally and safely executed, due in a large part to the superior leadership of junior NCOs and officers. You can be proud of their accomplishments. Rest assured that we are proud of your accomplishments at home!

We have been in sector for 30 days now and daily life is going well. We are not living in a palace or a castle, but we are doing well and living comfortably. We do not have all of the "creature comforts" that most have (Brown & Root dining facilities, MWR shows, movie theaters, PX's etc) but we are not living poorly either. We make improvements daily and will continue to do so...because our Soldiers deserve it.

We had some challenges as we assumed the sector. C Company made direct fire contact early in the campaign and PFC Robinson was severely injured by a Rocket Propelled Grenade, he is back at Walter Reed Medical Hospital receiving the best of medical care possible. A Company (B/1-18-Outlaws) had a Bradley roll off a cliff (after it gave way under the weight of the M2) into the Tigris River during a combat patrol causing two fatalities and one severely injured. Our thoughts and prayers remain with the family and friends of PFC Robinson, CPL Gomez, SPC Tracy Laramore, and SPC Clint Matthews. There were many heroic actions displayed during both of these incidents. As I stated

before we departed Germany, we are in a combat zone and it is a dangerous...we are well trained, equipped and led...but sometimes this environment can be unforgiving. We continue to accomplish our mission in the Big Red One tradition!! We are providing a stable and secure environment for the people of Iraq!

Many great things are happening both here and in Schweinfurt that we will never read about in the Stars and Stripes. I want to personally thank each and every one of you for your support; prayers and being the strongest that you can be during this deployment. I hear nothing but positive things from everyone that I talk to about the Schweinfurt community and the First Lightning Rear Detachment. It gives me a great sense of pride to know that we can stay focused here and that the "real" warriors are fighting the daily challenges and battles on the home front. It is not easy and you have my utmost respect.

We are still trying to figure out how to get the numerous photos taken back to the Rear Detachments...we will break the code. We owe that to you and will make it happen. Stay strong and again, thank you for all that you do!!! First Lightning!!

LTC Kyle M. McClelland
LTC, FA
Commanding

COMMENTS FROM DAGGER 6...



In the early morning hours of 4 March, Camp New York in Kuwait was bustling with activity. Soldiers in combat gear were checking vehicles, weapons and equipment preparing for the Brigade Combat Team's road march into Iraq. NCOs and officers did final pre-combat checks and inspections ... led by our unit chaplains, soldiers prayed for safe movement ... leaders at all levels gave rousing motivational speeches before the soldiers rolled.



At 0700 hours, TF Vanguard departed Camp New York and led the Dagger Brigade Combat team into the combat zone. For the next two days, 20 more groups (or "serials" as we call them) of vehicles amounting to over 2,100 soldiers made the grueling 500-mile trek. At the Iraqi border, we hit "The Berm," an earthen barrier that separates Kuwait from Iraq and we took the



next step on our journey. The temperature had started into the low 90's, and our soldiers were drinking plenty of water. The approach march lasted 2 days for most, and 3 days for some. A number of convoys travel on the road into Iraq, and every movement is carefully orchestrated – especially during this transition period -- to ensure that the roads are not overloaded. On the road march route, there are established Convoy Support Centers where we got fuel and some rest. By the evening of 6 March, the final convoys were rolling into their new homes known as Forward Operating Bases, or FOBs. Those who could not drive up were flown into FOB Anaconda and then moved to the FOBs by combat patrols. By 8 March the majority of the BCT was in Iraq.

The BCT was greeted by the great soldiers of the 1st Brigade (Raider Brigade) and 3rd Brigade (Striker Brigade) of the 4th Infantry Division. The Raider Brigade is stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, while the Striker Brigade is stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado. Each unit from Brigade through squad level linked up with a counterpart and started a 10-day process, what we call a "Relief In Place" or RIP, in order to transfer techniques, procedures, and equipment. Soldiers from these units walk our soldiers through every aspect of the mission, take them out on patrol, and then observe our patrols to make the transition between units as transparent to the local populace as possible. We meet the local leaders, the tribal sheiks, and establish relationships with our Iraqi Civil Defense Corps units. These are the brave men and women who have been serving in and around Tikrit since last year. Now we are replacing them as they make their well-deserved trip home.

Our soldiers live in a variety of conditions, depending on which Forward Operating Base (FOB) they operate from (we'll send more pictures as the year goes on). We do our best to ensure that they all have the basics: showers, at least one hot meal a day, adequate living quarters, access to Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facilities (phone, internet, TV, games). Some bases are well-established with large facilities and some are "work in progress" which we will improve over time.



As we close this note, rest assured that we are actively engaged in operations in our sectors. We know that many of you wonder how we are doing everyday – we have worked hard to get here and our training is paying off. While we are out on mission, we know that you are taking care of one another in Schweinfurt (and elsewhere). Many great things are happening here everyday, and the soldiers of this Brigade Combat Team remain committed to accomplishing this mission. Until next time

DUTY FIRST!!

COL Randy Dragon
Commander, Dagger Brigade Combat Team

LIGHTNING 7 COMMENTS...

Hello, family and loved ones of the Task Force Lightning Team. Life here on FOB Summerall is improving daily. We have currently reestablished our satellite system. It was down over the past week. The internet café has 12 working computers and 8 phones, soldiers must have a credit card to purchase minutes, calling cards unfortunately do not work. We do have a plan to double the internet capability in the near future.

Last week the DFAC started to serve hot UGR A meals along with an assortment of milk, sodas, Gatorade, Moon Pies and many more goodies. Many of the soldiers have availability to AFN, TV, and DVD players. FOB Summerall also has a gym where the soldiers can work out.

We have also upgraded the quality of life issues such as shower and latrines. The current ratio is 20 soldiers per unit. Our portion of the FOB has been named Fire Base Laramore-Matthews (after the 2 soldiers we

unfortunately lost in the Bradley accident). A sign to hang over the TOC is currently under construction.

Other quality of life improvements have started such as finance. Finance is available to soldiers on Friday and Saturday; it is limited but will improve with time. Mail is currently arriving, delivery time frame of about 7-14 days. Our mailing address has changed from FOB Lancer to FOB Summerall. Soldiers also are able to send small boxes and packages home. Mail sent to the German Post will cost \$.37. Life here at Fire Base Laramore-Matthews is getting better and will improve more so in the future. We are proud of the support given by the Rear Detachment, Families, and the Schweinfurt Community. Thanks for a job well done.

Wayne L. Sanders
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major

CHARLIE COMPANY COMMENTS...



Greetings from lovely Bayji, Iraq! The Cobras are serving as the main effort for Task Force 1-7 and are responsible for the city of Bayji. We are keeping a busy (and always hectic) pace ensuring the proper management of Bayji. Most soldiers are spending the rest of their time fixing up our new home, working out, or trying to fit in some down time.

After living in large tents in the middle of the Kuwaiti desert for 3 weeks, everyone was itching to begin our trek north and kick off our year in Iraq. Whether by plane, truck, or track, everyone arrived in Iraq about 3 weeks ago. C Battery (now C Company) consists of 135 soldiers, including our new 4th Platoon, an attachment of infantrymen from 1-26 IN. Together, we've moved into a mix of old Iraqi Air Force buildings (1st and HQ Platoons), hangers (2nd, and 3rd Platoons and Maintenance), and newly renovated storage units (4th Platoon). Compared to the rest of the Battalion, most everyone is happy to find themselves in permanent, hard structures. We've spent a great deal of time, hard work, and government money renovating or improving these buildings, which needs a lot of work. The base in general is also improving. We have 2 phone centers, 2 internet centers, religious services, 2 shops, and a recreation center. While these amenities are very small, they are improving constantly. Because we rely on Iraqi contractors for the internet and phone, these services frequently break for one reason or another. Don't be worried if you don't hear from your soldier for a few days – services are undoubtedly down.

The arrival of the mail truck every other day or so is always an exciting event. Continue to send mail frequently, despite the wait in arrival time. We've found it takes about 2-3 weeks for mail to arrive from Germany or the States, and about the same for mail sent from Iraq.

Our mission is going extremely well. Our soldiers were very well trained prior to leaving Germany (as you all know from the frequent trips to Grafenwohr and Hohenfels). I know the time apart was hard but the pay-offs are evident. The company is performing superbly. Everyone is on their toes and being as safe as possible. While you all have heard about the unfortunate incident in which one of our soldiers, PVT Jodey Robinson, was injured, this seems to be an isolated event. There is no doubt that there are plenty of unfriendly people in our sector. However, every time our soldiers leave the gate, we are making our sector a safer place in which to live. We keep active in several ways including traffic control points (stopping vehicles and searching for illegal items or suspects), conducting patrols (which allow the Iraqis to see us as a part of their lives and us to let us enforce the law in residential, commercial and industrial areas), and raids (apprehending criminals in their homes). These three missions contribute to our success and safety more and more everyday. While we all wish we were back in Germany, everyone is content with their work and mission in Iraq for the upcoming year. It is our honor to help ensure Iraq becomes a stable country and remove any threat that may danger our families or the American people.

CPT William Kirby
CPT, FA
Cobra Commander

ALPHA COMPANY COMMENTS...



Greetings from Iraq. The company has been extremely busy since our arrival in Kuwait. It is very difficult to describe all the monumental tasks we have completed in our move from Germany through Kuwait and up to Bayji, Iraq. Just know that we could not have done all we've completed without the hard work and dedication of every single Steel Knight Soldier. It was a difficult task completed to standard.

We are currently conducting mission in Bayji, Iraq and doing well. Currently each platoon conducts 1-2 combat patrols daily. Our first few weeks in country were much busier. Then we were averaging about 2-3 combat patrols daily. Our combat patrols could be best described as "Police work". We are driving through our area in our HMMWVs searching for terrorist and Anti-Coalition Forces. Thinking of Alpha Company, as a city police force is the easiest way to understand the kind of work we are doing.

Alpha Company has however had a tragic accident. On 17 March 2004, the infantry platoon attached to Alpha Company, "Outlaws" was conducting a combat patrol, near the Tigris River, in the vicinity of Bayji Iraq to identify an enemy position that fired mortars at Coalition Forces the night prior. A Bradley Fighting Vehicle was leading the patrol when suddenly the road collapsed underneath it and rolled into the river. Although members from the platoon and medical personnel did everything in their power to administer immediate aide and assistance, SPC Tracy Laramore and SPC Clint Matthews did not survive. CPL Joel Gomez was also critically wounded during the accident and is currently in Germany under the care of the best military doctors in our region.

The entire Outlaw Platoon and all of the Steel Knights were greatly saddened and hurt with the loss of these great Soldiers. We will all miss them. First Sergeant Jacobs' and my thoughts and prayers remain with all the families involved during this difficult time.

STEEL KNIGHT SIX, OUT

CPT Deric Holbrook
CPT, FA
Commanding



RECENT CAMP NAME CHANGES

FOB Lancer is now FOB Summerall
FOB Ironhorse is now FOB Danger
FOB Raider is now FOB Dagger
FOB Lion is now FOB O'Ryan
FOB Packhorse is now FOB Remagen
FOB Speicher did not change
FOB Omaha did not change
FOB Brassfield-Mora did not change
FOB Paliwoda did not change
LSA Anaconda did not change
FOB Regular is part of FOB Danger; so it no longer exists

BRAVO BATTERY COMMENTS...



Greetings to the families and friends of Team Bull! Since the last newsletter, we have all safely arrived in Iraq and begun our important mission in support of Task Force 1-77 and 2nd Brigade. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, we man radars, a fire direction center, and Paladins in support of FOB Paliwoda and LSA Anaconda. To date we have fired just under 100 rounds and our soldiers are excited to be conducting their MOS specific duties in a real world environment.

The soldiers appreciate every bit of encouragement from you on the phone and internet and especially when they receive packages. Mail call is certainly the highlight of the day for many soldiers. I would encourage you to continue sending packages and to take advantage of the free postage to our APO address if you are in Schweinfurt.

In May we plan on beginning the R&R program for our soldiers. As of now we expect to have 80-85% of Team Bull receive the opportunity to take leave during the rotation. For those who choose not to take leave or who do not receive the opportunity, there is an FMPP program to Qatar for a few days that is similar to the program that we enjoyed in Kosovo. One of our NCOs, SGT Salas, just opened a Supermarket on FOB Paliwoda with items for sale from local Iraqi vendors. He is serving as NCOIC of the market and provides soldiers the opportunity to purchase needed personal items, entertainment items, and Iraqi souvenirs.

In the next newsletter we hope to have some promotions to report for some of our soldiers. They are all doing an outstanding job and each contributes a great deal to the Task Force's overall success. To our families and friends in Schweinfurt and the States, I would like to personally thank you for all that you do to support our families at home and us. We know that it is no easy task. Your thoughts and prayers mean a great deal to us and you can rest assured that you are always on our minds. I hope that you have a Happy Easter and a warm and sunny spring! Take care and God bless.

"Bull 5"

THOMAS KLUMP
1LT, FA

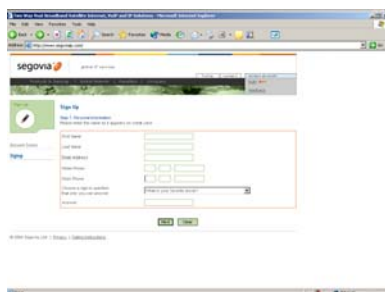


To purchase calling card minutes through Segovia:

1. Go to www.segoviaip.com and then move the mouse to the words "Purchase Segovia Calling Minutes." It is on the upper right corner of the web page.
2. Next, click on the red box that has the money sign and reads "Purchase Segovia Calling Minutes".



3. Fill in the information on the next page. The phone number does not make a difference. On the next page, click on the first box and begin entering the information.



4. Once you have filled out all of the information, you will receive minutes and a PIN (Personal Identification Number) to recharge your minutes at a later time.



HHB COMMENTS...



The Hurricanes are currently supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF II) from many different locations in Iraq. Our Fire Support Elements are currently deployed with their respective Task Forces and are operating in the surrounding areas of Tikrit, Samarra, and Balad. The battery command team has visited the Brigade Fire Support Element and met with the leadership of 1-18 Fire Support Element in the last two weeks, they are both doing very well and performing vital tasks to the brigade. We will get out to all of our sliced elements during this deployment, but due to the distance and operational tempo it may take a few more months to see everyone. The rest of the battery is located at FOB Summerall, near Bayji. This includes everyone in the TOC (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, FDC, TF FSE, and Battalion Command Team), Survey, Maintenance, Medics, Supply, Commo, QRF, Unit Ministry Team, and the Battery Command Team. In addition we have several units attached to our battery, including a mortar section from 1-18, an engineer platoon from 9E, Radar, Signal, and Civil Affairs elements.

We have spent the last month conducting missions both inside and outside the FOB. Our daily operations outside the FOB include conducting armed escort for vehicle convoys, conducting Retrans for units out on patrol, sending out the QRF on various missions, escorting our Civil Affairs team to project sites, clearing

sections of roadway of any hazards, and running combat logistical patrols. Inside the wire the TOC operates 24 hours a day providing command and control of the task force. We have an expertly run maintenance facility and aid station, including a helipad for fast evacuation to the combat support hospital. We additionally have an element that controls and trains an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps Company. Everyone is doing an outstanding job at supporting the Task Force, we are extremely proud of the troops performance.

Congratulations to SFC Lancaster, SGT Hoffman, and SGT McDonald for their recent promotions. We also send congratulations to the following soldiers who each received a Battery Command Team Coin in recognition of their exceptionally hard work and dedication during preparation for deployment: SSG Comfort, SSG Grochala, SGT Bowers, SGT Fisher, SPC Martinez, Michael, and PFC Largus.

We are in the process of compiling digital photos from several different soldiers on a CD ROM. By 2 April we will mail the disk to our FRG Leader, Amy Lennox and she'll make it available to view and copy. Mail has started flowing in and it is a great morale booster for the troops, please continue to send care packages and letters!

Ride the Storm!!

BRIAN D. VAUGHAN
CPT, FA
Commanding

HURRICANES!

HOWARD C. PATRICK
1SG, USA
First Sergeant

WALK TO IRAQ AND BACK

Why become a Participant?

- **Health Benefits**
 - Stress Management
 - Positive Attitude – better overall outlook on life situations; improve mental awareness
 - Decrease risk factors associated with debilitating diseases (heart disease, stroke)
- **Increase Work Performance**
- **Less chance of illness/injury as a result of a regular exercise program**
- **Develop positive lifestyle behavior through participating in a regular exercise program**
- **Get involved with your FRG!**



You can start recording any activity that can be tracked in terms of miles as of 1 February 2004 (bike, swim, walk, run, cardio-machines etc). Participants will need to accumulate 4000 miles by 1 March 2005 to complete the Walk to Iraq and Back portion. Participants that log 10,000 steps in any day will be awarded 6 miles towards the 2,000 miles to get to Iraq. Turn your mileage into your FRL or FRG every month for both the individual and the FRG program.

Interested participants can contact their battery FRL or FRG leader for more information.

DELTA BATTERY COMMENTS



1SG Ebbs and I would like to thank the ladies and the Soldiers of the Dragon Battery who planned and executed a fantastic Easter Party. The event was a complete success, from the stuffed Easter eggs to the jovial Easter Bunny. The event lifted spirits here in Schweinfurt, as it will in Iraq with 38 pictures emailed after the event.

March was another very busy month for the Dragons. We started the month by sending several Soldiers to the Schweinfurt Elementary School to read to children during the National Reading Day. Both the Soldiers and children found this event very rewarding. The second week of March found the Dragons training the transition platoon on Individual



Readiness Tasks (IRT). This training was very similar to what the Soldiers forward did during the month of October. The transition Soldiers shot an incredible M16 range, put together by SFC Egbers and SSG Brown. One event had the Soldiers run a quarter mile with all of their gear, stop, pick up their weapon, and then shoot at random targets. The training was to replicate the effects of adrenaline and for the Soldiers to focus on their breathing technique. Next, the Soldiers executed lane training, similar to that of Gunnery. The platoon trained on reacting to a sniper, reacting to indirect fire, dealing with the media, and searching people and vehicles. The third week of March found the Dragons in the motorpool, caring for the combat systems left behind. D Battery is responsible for 12 howitzers and 15 fire support vehicles.



The last three days of March were busy with FRG activity. The Battalion Steering Committee met on 29 March. HHB had outstanding participation at their 30 March meeting, with over 40 spouses learning about stress management. A, B, and C had meetings on the 31st of March. The B FRG meeting was the second one they had this month. All FRGs were disappointed about the lack of new photos, but we have already received over 50 for next month's meetings. All in all, over 95 First Lightning spouses attended FRG meetings the last two days of the month.

1SG Ebbs and I would like to congratulate a few Dragon families that had babies this month, SSG and Mrs. Bullard on 03 March and SPC and Mrs. Ardledeg on 13 March.

We would also like to introduce a new member of the Dragon Battery team. Mrs. Angela Beller is our new Family Support Assistant. Mrs. Beller brings diversity to the team, as she is a civilian, a family member, and an expert in Family Readiness Groups. In fact, she is currently serving in her third Battalion Family Readiness Group leader position, with 1-26 Infantry. Further, she can relate to most spouses in the community, as her husband is also deployed. We hope that she will bring new insight into the Dragon Battery.

As a final note, please do not hesitate to call the rear detachment. We have Soldiers on duty 24 hours a day to answer questions or help solve a problem. If the Soldiers on duty do not know the answer immediately, they will log your issue, find an answer, and call you back. The phone number is 09721-96-6484 (from the German economy), 011-49-9721-96-6484 (from the United States), or 354-6484 (DSN).

Victory for our Troops - Victory for our Families!

Dragons!

MATTHEW LENNOX
CPT, FA
Commanding

W. LEE EBBS
1SG, USA
First Sergeant

SVC BATTERY COMMENTS...



Greetings from the Mighty Serpents!! The battery has been doing great things from the time we arrived in Kuwait to present. I would like to take this time to thank all spouses and families for their continued support and hard work that is conducted while we are deployed.

Even though we are deployed, the pace remains fast and intensive. For starters, while in Kuwait, the battery focused on polishing its skills in Individual Readiness Training and provided the battalion along with Camp New York first class service and support while preparing to move into Kuwait. First class service and support included providing ammunition for soldiers to improve their marksmanship, ensuring soldiers in the battalion were able to get to the firing range and our cooks providing long hours and unparallel experience in running a first class dining facility. To conclude our rigorous and intensive stay at Camp New York, Kuwait was the division level Convoy Live Fire Exercise where Service Battery performed exceptionally well. Prior to movement into Iraq, soldiers were motivated and focused on the movement to our new home, FOB Summerall.

Our current focus is solely what this battery does best and that is to support the battalion in any way possible logistically. So far, Service Battery has done an exceptional job and I appreciate all of the hard work that has been done to this point to include fueling, fixing, handling ammunition and supply.

To the Battery Family Readiness Group and Family Readiness Liaison, I would like to thank you for all that you have done to this point. Your dedication in providing and receiving accurate information has lessened the worries of the soldiers. Continue to take care of each other and we promise to do the same here.

Before closing there are two congrats in order. First, we would like to congratulate PV2 Wisdom and his wife Simone for their newborn baby boy. Secondly we would like to congratulate SGT Agnini and his wife Marina for the birth of their newborn baby boy. We hope the best for the both families as they encounter the world of parenthood.

Finally, I would like to again thank all families and friends for their never-ending support as Service Battery continue to do great things on a daily basis. **SERPENTS!!**

CHRISTOPHER A. WASHINGTON
CPT, FA
Commanding

MARVIN C. CROMARTIE
1SG, USA
First Sergeant

If you have any suggestion, questions, or feedback to improve this newsletter, please feel free to contact CPT Lennox, DSN 354-7097 or email matthew.lennox@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil.

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KYLE M. McClelland
LTC, FA
Commanding

